

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please replace the claims with the claims provided in the listing below wherein status, amendments, additions and cancellations are indicated.

1. (Currently Amended) A method, in which a sterilizing agent is used to sterilize bottles of a temperature-sensitive plastic, ~~especially PET~~ bottles, which are being advanced along a conveying path periodically, wherein a peroxide aerosol is heated to a starting temperature of sterilization of about 60° to 90°C and blown into interior of the bottles for a time period sufficient to keep interior walls of the bottles at a permissible temperature of the temperature-sensitive plastic or less, the starting temperature being sufficient to produce a peroxide condensate film formed on the inner wall of the bottles, and subsequently sterile air, with an activation temperature of about 90° to 120°C, exceeding the sterilization starting temperature of the peroxide aerosol, is blown into the interior of the bottles for a time period sufficient to keep interior walls of the bottles at the permissible temperature or less, until the aerosol condensate has been activated and evaporated, after which residues of peroxide aerosol are expelled from the interior of the bottles by the renewed blowing in of sterile air.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein means are provided to produce [[the]] peroxide ~~is fogged~~ into the peroxide aerosol at ambient temperature and heated then heat the peroxide aerosol to the starting temperature of the sterilization on way to the interior of the bottles.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the peroxide aerosol, before it is introduced into the bottles, is heated to a temperature of ~~about 60° to 90°C and preferably~~ of about 70° to 80°C as the starting temperature for the sterilization.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the peroxide aerosol, before it is blown into the bottles, is introduced at ambient temperature into flowing sterile air, which has been heated to an activation temperature, ~~and heated by the latter to heat the peroxide aerosol~~ to the sterilization starting temperature on the way to the interior of the bottles.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the peroxide aerosol and [[the]] sterile air heated to the activation temperature are kept separate until they enter the interior of the bottles whereat the peroxide aerosol is heated to the activation temperature.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the introduction of peroxide aerosol into the interior of the bottles is carried out in at least two separate, consecutive steps.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein, following the blowing in of peroxide aerosol, at least one pause in the action, corresponding to at least one conveying advance of the bottles along the conveying path, precedes the blowing of sterile air, heated to the activation temperature, into the interior of the bottles.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein sterile air is blown in in at least two separate steps, corresponding in each case to one conveying advance of the bottles along the conveying path.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the sterile air is heated to an activation temperature of ~~about 90° to 120°C and preferably of about 110°C.~~

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein, after sterile air heated to the activation temperature has been blown in, sterile air, which has been heated to a lower temperature, is blown in in subsequent, separate processes.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the sterile air, which has been heated to the activation temperature, is blown at the rate of about 25 to 30 m/s and preferably of about 28 m/s into the interior of the bottles.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the sterile air is blown in at a lower temperature with a flow rate of about 70 to 90 m/s and preferably of about 80 m/s into the interior of the bottles.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein sterile air is blown in over a period of 1 to 3 seconds and preferably of about 2 seconds.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein about 0.15 ml of peroxide per 100 cm² of interior surface of the bottles is introduced into the latter.

15. (Currently Amended) A method for sterilizing bottles formed of a temperature-sensitive plastic, comprising:

introducing peroxide aerosol into interiors of the bottles at a starting temperature of about 60° to 90°C for a time period sufficient to keep interior walls of the bottles at a permissible temperature of the temperature-sensitive plastic or less and sufficient to produce a peroxide condensate film on interiors of the bottles;

introducing sterile air into the bottles at an activation temperature of about 90° to 120°C for a time period sufficient to keep interior walls of the bottles at the permissible temperature or less, exceeding the sterilization starting temperature, and sufficient to activate and evaporate the peroxide condensate film on the interiors of the bottles until the peroxide condensate film has evaporated; and

introducing further amounts of sterile air into the interiors of the bottles sufficient to expel residues of peroxide from the interiors of the bottles.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15 wherein the bottles are moved in periodic advancements along a conveying path between positions whereat the introduction the peroxide aerosol heated to the starting temperature is done, the introduction of the sterile air into the bottles at the activation temperature is done,

and the introduction of the sterile air into the bottles to expel residues of peroxide from the interiors of the bottles is done.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16 wherein the introduction of the peroxide aerosol into the interior of the bottles is carried out in at least two separate periodic advancements.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 17 wherein, following the introduction of the peroxide aerosol in at least two separate periodic advancements, at least one pause corresponding to a periodic advancement is executed before a next periodic advancement following which the introduction of the sterile air into the bottles at the activation temperature is done.

19. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15 wherein, following the introduction of the peroxide aerosol, at least one pause corresponding to a periodic advancement is executed before a next periodic advancement following which the introduction of the sterile air into the bottles at the activation temperature is done.

20. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 15 wherein means are provided to produce peroxide is fogged into the peroxide aerosol at ambient

temperature and ~~heated then heat the peroxide aerosol~~ to the starting temperature of the sterilization on way to the interior of the bottles.

21. (Cancel)

22. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 21 wherein, the peroxide aerosol, before it is introduced into the bottles, is heated to the starting temperature of about 70° to 80°C.

23. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 20 wherein, the peroxide aerosol, before it is introduced into the bottles, is heated to the starting temperature by introduction into flowing sterile air which has been heated to the activation temperature.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15, wherein the sterile air is heated to the activation temperature of about 110°C.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15 wherein the sterile air is introduced in at least two separate steps to expel peroxide residue.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15, wherein, the sterile air is introduced in two steps and is heated to the activation temperature in a first step of the two steps and is heated to a lower temperature in a second step of the two steps.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26, wherein the sterile air, heated to the activation temperature, is introduced at the rate of about 25 to 30 m/s

28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27, wherein the sterile air is heated to the activation temperature of about 110°C.

29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26, wherein the sterile air heated to the lower temperature is introduced at a rate of about 70 to 90 m/s.

30. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein the permissible temperature is 55°C or less.

31. (New) The method of claim 15 wherein the permissible temperature is 55°C or less.